

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5777

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, MY

SUBJECT: UMNO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPLACED

1. SUMMARY. MOHAMED ADIB BIN HAJI HAS REPLACED KHALIL AKASAH AS UMNO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND HAS VOWED TO AVOID KHALIL'S SIN OF PARTISANSHIP IN UMNO FACTIONAL SQUABBLING. SHAHRIR ABDUL SAMAD, A BRIGHT YOUNG POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, LEAVES FOR A YEAR'S SABBATICAL IN SWITZERLAND. THESE MOVES SHOULD PLEASE UMNO RIGHT WINGERS WHO HAD ATTACKED SEVERAL FORMER RAZAK STAFFERS WHO HAD BEEN RETAINED BY HUSSEIN ONN. NOW ONLY ONE OF THE FOUR INDIVIDUALS ACCUSED BY NAME BY UMNO YOUTH LEADER JAAFAR ALBAR AS BEING PRO-COMMUNISTS REMAINS IN THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. WE LEARNED RECENTLY AND LOCAL PRESS CONFIRMED JAN 1 THAT CONTROVERSIAL UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO) AND NATIONAL FRONT (NF) EXECUTIVE SECRETARY KHALIL AKASAH RESIGNED EFFECTIVE DEC 31 AND HAS BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPLACED AS OF 1 JAN BY MOHAMED ADIB BIN HAJI ADAM. WE UNDERSTAND THAT KHALIL, WHO HAS A VARIETY OF BUSINESS INTERSTS, WILL TAKE UP POSITIONS WITH ONE OR MORE JAPANESE FIRMS.

3. ADIB, 34, DESCRIBED AS A "VERY BRIGHT" MALAY VISITED THE U.S. AS AN IVP GRANTEE IN OCT-NOV 1972. HE

IS A FORMER MALAYSIAN CIVIL SERVICE OFFICER WHO WAS UMNO YOUTH EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FEB-JUNE 1971, THEN UMNO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY UNTIL REPLACED BY KHALIL ON 1 JAN 1973. AFTER SERVING BRIEFLY IN 1973 AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANT TO THEN AGRICULTURE MINISTER ABDUL GHAFAR BABA, HE JOINED THEN DEPUTY TRADE AND INDUSTRIES MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM AS ASSISTANT FOR SPECIAL FUNCTIONS, SERVING ON MUSA'S STAFF UP TO 1975 WHEN HE WAS POSTED TO THE MALAYSIAN EMBASSY AT THE HAGUE AS INFORMATION ATTACHE (ON CONTRACT TO MFA) UNTIL HIS RETURN HERE SEVERAL WEEK AGO. ON ASSUMING OFFICE ADIB TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE WOULD SERVE AS A "POLITICAL FUNCTIONARY" AND AS SUCH WOULD ASSUME A NON-PARTISAN ROLE FAVORING NO RPT NO SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS WITHIN UMNO. "I WILL OBEY THE DIRECTIVE OF THE PRESIDENT (HUSSEIN ONN IS ACTING PRESIDENT), SECRETARY GENERAL (DATUK SENU ABDUL RAHMAN), THE SUPREME COUNCIL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UMNO," HE ADDED, NOTING HE WOULD PLAY A SIMILAR NEUTRAL ROLE WHILE WEARING HIS NF HAT.

4. IN A SEPARATE BUT NOT UNRELATED DEVELOPMENT, SHAHRIR ABDUL SAMAD, 27, A POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER LEFT YESTRDAY (JAN 4) FOR A YEAR'S SABBATICAL FOR AN MBA COURSE AT A MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND. SHAHRIR, ALSO AN EX-IVP GRANTEE (OCT-NOV 1976), IS ANOTHER MUSA HITAM PROTOGE AND A HOLD-OVER FROM THE RAZAK ERA. HE SUPPOSEDLY HAD BEEN OFFERED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY JOB BY THE PM BUT IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE DECLINED IT OF HIS OWN VOLITION OR WHETHER HIS NOMINATION ENCOUNTERED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION IN SENIOR CIRCLES OF UMNO. HE PLANS TO RESUME HIS POLITICAL SECRETARY JOB IN JANUARY 1978.

5. FOR EMBASSY THE HAGUE: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU CAN PROVIDE ON ADIB, ESPECIALLY RE HIS DEALINGS WITH USG PERSONNEL.

6. COMMENT: THESE CHANGES ARE LIKELY TO PLEASE SUPPORTERS OF EX-UMNO YOUTH CHIEF DATUK HARUN IDRIS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF UMNO "OLD GUARD" WHO HAD FELT THEMSELVES BRASHLY ELBOWED ASIDE BY LATE PM RAZAK'S YOUTHFUL FORMER LIEUTENANTS, KHALIL IS A WHEELER DEALER PAR EXCELLENCE WHO DURING HIS THREE YEARS IN OFFICE RELISHED HIS ROLE AND INFLUENCE BUT OVER TIME RAN UP A GROWING LIST OF POLITICAL ENEMIES INCLUDING HARUN AND EX-SABAH CHIEF MINISTER TUN MUSTAPHA WHO SAW HIM AS A KEY FIGURE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL DEMISES. ACCORDING TO SHAHRIR, KHALIL MIGHT HAVE RETAINED HIS JOB HAD HE NOT ACTIVELY ESPOUSED GHAFAR BABA'S UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDACY

FOR THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER POST LAST YEAR, THEREBY
ALIENATING THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE, DR. MAHATHIR
MOHAMED. WITH KHALIL'S DEPARTURE, OF THE FOUR PERSONS
TARGETED BY NAME BY RIGHT WING UMNO FIGURE JAAFAR ALBAR
AS ALLEGED PRO-COMMUNISTS, ONLY WAHAB MAJID, THE PM'S
PRESS SECRETARY AND BROTHER OF DETAINED EX-MINISTER
ABDULLAH MAJID, REMAINS AT HIS JOB.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

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